

the system has become a playground for personal injury trial lawyers as they file sham, abusive cases in lawsuit-friendly counties. And all too often the attorneys collect multi-million-dollar settlements for themselves, while their clients, the real victims, get left with nothing more than a coupon, often worth nothing more than the paper upon which it is printed.

Recently, a large national video rental chain, after being named in 23 class-action lawsuits, agreed to provide consumers in the lawsuit with dollar coupons, and attorneys in this case received over \$9 million.

Even more outrageous is the case where consumers were awarded 33 cents each in a settlement with a well-known national bank, not even enough to buy a stamp, while attorneys in the case walked away with \$4 million.

Mr. Speaker, this amount of money distorts the incentives for personal injury lawyers. They no longer represent their clients; they become coplaintiffs. It is past time we did something about it. That is why we should return commonsense justice to the American people by passing S.5, The Class Action Fairness Act.

#### EDUCATION BUDGET CUTS

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago, President Bush promised that no child would be left behind when he signed education reform legislation into law. But last week the President unveiled a budget with education cuts that breaks his promise to America's children.

The President's budget calls for the elimination of 41 education programs. Just some examples: The President eliminates vocational educational grants that help our States teach high school vocational skills to students in the hope that they will use these skills to find jobs. He eliminates educational technology grants to States, despite the fact that studies show technology can substantially raise student achievement. The President's budget eliminates a promotional effort to create ways to best educate disabled students.

Mr. Speaker, the President broke his promise to millions of children with this budget. We should reject this budget because of the education cuts alone and live up to our promises to see that no child is left behind.

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#### MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

(Mr. CHOCOLA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, the recent assassination of the former Leba-

nese Prime Minister reminds us once again how fragile life can be in this part of the world. That is why we must remain resolute in our mission to support efforts in the Middle East that promote stability and promote peace.

In Iraq, we are witnessing an emerging democracy that is bringing new hope and sovereignty to once-vanquished peoples. The recent Israeli-Palestinian truce is the crucial step towards reestablishing the confidence that has so often eluded its leaders. This is a necessary ingredient to advance the cause of peace in a region inflicted by terror and violence.

Mr. Speaker, the historic developments of the past few months are a ray of hope in a region that is often clouded by darkness and give us reason to believe that a new era has begun, one which will eventually lead to peace.

#### TRADE DEFICIT

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, this administration has repeatedly set records for debts and deficits and the latest is for our enormous trade deficit. We have raised the debt ceiling three times to cover their deficit spending, over \$470 billion. That comes out to over \$26,000 owed by every man, woman, and child in America.

Their newest record is an all-time high in a trade deficit, nearly \$618 billion, the highest in our history. This is a huge burden for our economy because we are borrowing from foreign countries to pay for our imports. We should never build our economic system on a foundation of debts, deficit, and foreign loans. Any day that foundation could become a house of cards.

#### ENDING FRIVOLOUS LAWSUITS

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, frivolous lawsuits are hurting our economy, and they must be stopped. Lawsuit abuse affects everyone. Frivolous lawsuits and junk lawsuits jam our judicial system. Frivolous lawsuits increase the cost of medicine and medical treatment. They hurt our health care, hurt the American economy, and they hurt American jobs.

Mr. Speaker, it is because jury awards in civil trials have become blank checks for plaintiff lawyers. Increased numbers of cases and the absurd rewards they yield have resulted in the highest per-person cost of litigation of any country in the world. They cost small businesses the most and many have closed their doors.

It is Congress's duty to ensure that this type of legislation is not abused. President Bush's plan for tort reform

lays a strong groundwork to address medical liability reform, class action lawsuit reform, asbestos litigation reform. It is clear that too many of these lawsuits are being abused. Congress must act today to ensure that we have a healthy economy tomorrow.

#### STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I salute President Bush's leadership on the need to strengthen Social Security with personal retirement accounts. I am hearing a lot of haranguing on the other side, most of it untrue. This debate begins and ends with our pledge that nothing will change for people 55 and older.

This current debate must focus on the future of younger Americans. Social Security was created for a much different America. Created in 1935, current taxes more than covered current opinions. The average working male lived to age 60, when people retired at age 65. When Social Security started, 42 people supported one retiree. Now 3.3 workers support one retiree, and it is on a downward trend too.

We have got to do better for our children and our grandchildren. We must strengthen Social Security for our children and for America's future.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 310, BROADCAST DECECY ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 95 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 95

*Resolved*, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 310) to increase the penalties for violations by television and radio broadcasters of the prohibitions against transmission of obscene, indecent, and profane material, and for other purposes. The bill shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate on the bill equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; (2) an amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by Representative Upton of Michigan or his designee, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order or demand for division of the question, shall be considered as read, and shall be separately debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The gentlewoman from